

REMARKS

The enclosed is responsive to the Examiner's Final Office Action mailed on April 6, 2007. At the time the Examiner mailed the Office Action claims 16-31 and 33-48, were pending. Claims 18, 19, 22, 33-37, 40, 41 and 43-45 were allowed. By way of the present response Applicants have amended claims 16, 17, 38, 39, 42, and 46-48, without prejudice. As such, claims 16-31 and 33-48 are now pending. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application and allowance of all claims now presented.

Claim Objections

Claims 42, 46, and 48 were objected to due to informalities, which have been corrected in the amendment to the claims. Applicants believe that the objections to the claims have been overcome and respectfully requests the removal of the objections.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 38-39, 42, and 46-48 are rejected under 35 U.S.C § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Applicant traverses the rejection on the grounds that the various embodiments can all be found in the specifications, at least in paragraphs [16], [18], [24], [32], [37], [38], [40], [46], and [50], and that paragraphs [4], [14], and [52] anticipate the combination of embodiments. Further, MPEP 2163.06, 2164, and 2165.01 (II), state that "information contained in one aspect of the specifications, ... may be added to other parts of the specifications, without introducing new matter."; and "the fact that an additional limitation to a claim may lack descriptive support in the disclosure ... does not

necessarily mean that the limitation is also not enabled.”; and that “There is no statutory requirement for the disclosure of a specific example …”. MPEP 2163 states that “To satisfy the written description requirement, a patent specification must describe the claimed invention in sufficient detail that one skilled in the art can reasonably conclude that the inventor had possession of the claimed invention.” Applicant asserts that the disclosure anticipates the combination of various disclosed embodiments.

Nonetheless, in order to expedite prosecution of the application, Applicant has amended the claims to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the invention. Applicant asserts that the amended claims and above remarks overcome the new matter rejection. Applicant, accordingly, respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections of claims 38-39, 42, and 46-48 under 35 U.S.C. § 112. Therefore, since claims 38, 39, 42, and 46-47 depend upon previously allowed independent claims, the dependent claims should also be allowable.

Claims 16-17, 20-21, 23-31, and 48 are rejected under 35 U.S.C § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Applicant has amended claim 16 to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the invention, consistent with the Examiner’s suggestions.

Applicant, accordingly, respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections of claims 16-17, 20-21, 23-31, and 48 under 35 U.S.C. § 112.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 16-17, 20-21, 23-31 and 48 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hasebe et al. (U.S. 5,658,615) hereinafter “*Hasebe*” in view of Batchelder (U.S. 5,472,502) hereinafter “*Batchelder*”. In light of the amendment, the Examiner’s rejections have become moot. Nonetheless, the following remarks regarding the Examiner’s rejections and the amended claims may be helpful to expedite prosecution.

Independent claim 16, as amended, relates to a **method for coating a surface of a substrate** with a polymer solution comprising: **removing excess solvent liquid while processing substrates to be coated** with a polymer solution, wherein **the excess solvent liquid** comprises solvent that did not get transformed into the solvent vapor from the region above the substrate within the chamber **to form a reduced droplet carrier-solvent vapor mixture**; and wherein **the removing** of excess solvent liquid **to form** the reduced droplet carrier-solvent mixture helps prevent excess solvent liquid from dropping on the substrate.

In addition to the distinctions identified between the claimed invention and the prior art of record in the previous Response, filed 1/16/2007, Applicant provides the following remarks and distinctions. In the Office Action mailed 4/06/07, paragraph 2, in the Response to Arguments, the Examiner acknowledges that Batchelder fails to explicitly state the process of removing excess solvent liquid, but the Examiner takes the position that the showerhead would inherently form a reduced droplet carrier-solvent vapor mixture, due to the size of the perforations in the showerhead, and that “**during cleaning of the equipment**” the excess liquid solvent would necessarily be removed after processing, such as when cleaning and/or replacing the filter.

Applicant asserts that, even though the Examiner is required to read the claims with the broadest reasonable interpretation, the above reading is not reasonable. The preamble of

claim 16 relates to a **method for coating a surface of a substrate** with a polymer solution, and not to a method of **cleaning and maintaining an apparatus** for coating a substrate, in combination with a method for coating a substrate. Applicant asserts that it is unreasonable to expand the method of coating to also include events occurring long before or long after the substrates have been coated. Cleaning and maintaining the apparatus, as suggested by the Examiner, does not occur with each substrate processed, but instead the processing of substrates is completely halted during the cleaning and maintenance, further suggesting the lack of relevance to the coating process itself. However, in order to expedite prosecution of the application, Applicant has amended claim 16 to require **removing excess solvent liquid while processing substrates to be coated** with a polymer solution, thus neither Hasebe nor Batchelder disclose nor suggest the removal of excess solvent liquid **while** processing substrates.

In addition, Applicant asserts that it is not necessarily inherent to form a reduced droplet carrier-solvent vapor mixture, due to the size of the perforations in the showerhead, i.e. the perforations are too small to permit dripping of liquid solvent. Inherency requires that the feature or limitation **must** be a result of the prior art disclosure. The rejection is not clear as to the rationale behind the assertion of inherency. Although, individual drops of liquid may have the required surface tension to prevent the drop from passing through a small aperture, it is not necessarily inherent that a pool of liquid solvent, having a markedly different surface tension distribution, would be prevented from passing through small perforations.

Further, the rejection fails to consider the limitation that **the removing** of excess solvent liquid **to form** the reduced droplet carrier-solvent mixture. Instead, the rejection asserts that the showerhead prevents drops, and thus, the vapor injected is a reduced droplet

carrier-solvent mixture, and that the removing would occur in the cleaning of the equipment. However, the rejection fails to recognize that the limitations require that the removing of excess liquid, results in forming the reduced droplet carrier-solvent mixture, and thus, the two limitations are connected in a cause and effect relationship, which the rejection fails to produce.

In view of the above remarks, a specific discussion of the dependent claims is considered to be unnecessary. Therefore, Applicants' silence regarding any dependent claim is not to be interpreted as agreement with, or acquiescence to, the rejection of such claim or as waiving any argument regarding that claim. Nonetheless, the following remarks regarding the Examiner's rejections and the amended claims may be helpful to expedite prosecution.

Claim 17 relates to a method further comprising: **detecting a solvent liquid level** within the coating chamber with a **fluid sensor** **while** **processing substrates** to be coated with a polymer solution, the solvent liquid being excess solvent that did not get transformed into the solvent vapor; and **then removing** the excess solvent **by vaporizing** the excess solvent while processing substrates to be coated with a polymer solution.

In contrast, the prior art of record fails to disclose nor suggest **detecting a solvent liquid level**, nor a **fluid sensor**, **while** **processing substrates**; and **then removing** the excess solvent **by vaporizing** the excess solvent **while** processing substrates. Note that the rejection involves removing the excess solvent during cleaning, requiring that the processing of substrates is halted, thus also teaching away from the claims. The excess is not vaporized, nor is there a fluid sensor, nor a means for detecting the solvent liquid level while processing.

Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the rejection of claims 16-17, 20-21, 23-31 and 48 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Hasebe* in view of *Batchelder*.

CONCLUSION

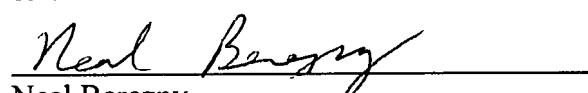
Applicants respectfully submit that in view of the amendments and arguments set forth herein, the rejections herein have been overcome. Accordingly, it is believed that all claims now pending patentably define the subject invention over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly solicited at the earliest possible date. If the Examiner determines the prompt allowance of these claims could be facilitated by a telephone conference, the Examiner is invited to contact Neal Berezny or Michael A. Bernadicou at (408) 720-8300.

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.136(a)(3), applicant(s) hereby request and authorize the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office to (1) treat any concurrent or future reply that requires a petition for extension of time as incorporating a petition for extension of time for the appropriate length of time and (2) charge all required fees, including extension of time fees and fees under 37 C.F.R. 1.16 and 1.17, to Deposit Account No. 02-2666.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: June 14, 2007


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